

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 35 are pending in the application. Claims 23, 24 and 33 are withdrawn without prejudice.

The Office Action requires applicants to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits. The Office Action asserts that an election of a single species is required from one of the following alleged species:

Species I, directed to figures 1-8,
Species II, directed to figures 9-13 and 21,
Species III, directed to figures 14-17 and 20,
Species IV, directed to figure 18, and
Species V, directed to figure 19.

Applicant elects Species III, directed to figures 14-17 and 20, with traverse. Species III reads on claims 1-22, 25-32, 34 and 35. Applicant thus elects claims 1-22, 25-32, 34 and 35 for prosecution on the merits. Claims 23, 24 and 33 are withdrawn from consideration.

Applicant traverses the rejection, as applicant submits that at least species III, IV and V should be considered together for prosecution. Species III is directed to a modular connector assembly 280 having connector modules 140 and two or more variable guide elements. Species III, as shown in figure 17, shows the ground terminal 110 of the connector modules 140.

Applicant submits that ground terminals 410 and 510 of species IV and V, respectively, should also be considered on the merits along with modular connector assembly 280. As disclosed in the specification, ground terminal 110 is a component of connector module 140 (see Fig. 15), which is a component of assembly 280. The specification discloses that ground terminal 410 of figure 18 (species IV) is designed the

same way as ground terminal 110 (page 21, lines 27-28). Ground terminal 410 includes the minor variation of replacing the spherical contact points of ground terminal 110 with cylindrical or bead-like contact zones (page 21, lines 22-25). Similarly, Fig. 19 (species V) discloses a further variation on the ground terminal 110 and 410. Ground terminal 510 is modified in that the two rear contacts are a single contact zone 522a (page 21, lines 33-35).

Thus, the ground terminals of species IV and V represent minor variations of the ground terminal of species III. Therefore, it would not be a serious burden for Examiner to search for prior art relating to these species IV and V, and examine species IV and V along with species III. Because it would not be a serious burden to the examiner, Applicant submits that it is in the interest of both the Applicant, the Examiner and the public to examine these species together, to ensure an efficient prosecution of this application. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner examine species III, IV and V together on the merits.

The Office Action indicates that no claim is generic. Applicant disagrees and submits that at least independent claims 1 and 13 are generic to species I-V.

Claim 1 is generic to alleged species I-V, because claim 1 provides novel limitations that are present in all of the above species. Particularly, all of the above species include the novel features of at least one ground terminal having at least a first contact section and a first spring arm section, with the first contact section having at least one first and second contact that are mechanically coupled. Thus, claim 1 is generic to species I-V.

Claim 13 is also generic to alleged species I-V. Species I-V disclose an electrical connector for a mating connection to a complementary mating connector. The electrical connector includes at least a ground terminal with at least a first contact section and a first spring arm section. The first contact section has at least a first and second contact which form a first and a second contact pair, respectively, with a mating ground terminal

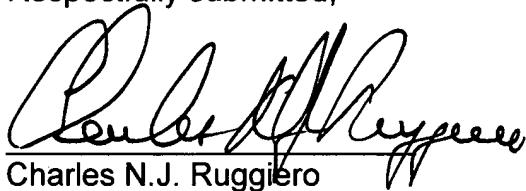
of the complementary mating connector. The connector and the complementary mating connector defining a completely mated final position, and the ground terminal is designed such that the first contact pair is opened in said completely mated final position. Thus, claim 13 is generic to species I-V, because species I-V disclose the novel features of the ground terminal as recited in claim 13.

An indication of the allowability of all pending claims by issuance of a Notice of Allowability is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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